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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
15 October 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Indonesian Army Loyalties

1. Certain army leaders apparently regard the leftist coup of 30 September--which cost the lives of six top generals--as presenting a last opportunity to take significant action against the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). They feel that unless action is taken now, Indonesia will slide into Communism. They hesitate to act, however, because to challenge Communism is tantamount to challenging President Sukarno. Even if Sukarno's political tendencies were not to the left, his insistence on national unity would serve to protect the PKI. Only in the unlikely event that the Communists should oppose Sukarno would he sanction an army move to crush the party.

2. In assessing army loyalties in a possible confrontation with PKI, army leaders must consider two problems: the extent of Sukarno's hold on the army should he challenge the decision of the army leaders and call on the country to unite behind him; and the extent and effectiveness of Communist infiltration in the armed forces.

3. Sukarno's influence remains impressive. Throughout the nation and particularly in densely populated Java, Sukarno retains his charismatic appeal. Moreover, he is still the symbol of Indonesian national independence and pride. To the average Javanese soldier or officer, a decision to oppose a direct order from Sukarno would be a denial of nationhood and the equivalent of treason. Most Indonesians--both military and civilian--would also be influenced by the fluidity of the situation, the uncertainty of the outcome, and the desire to be on the winning side. To stick with Sukarno would simply

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seem safer. A total repression of the PKI by the army would almost certainly require Sukarno's unlikely acquiescence or enforced silence.

4. Those Javanese who would be willing to oppose Sukarno in the higher interest of an anti-Communist crusade would be those who are religiously motivated or who have a political or economically based understanding of the Communist threat to Indonesia's way of life. Outside of Java, the anti-Sukarno group would be larger and would be influenced by anti-Javanese sentiment as well as by religious, political, and economic motivations.

5. An assessment of Indonesian army loyalties in an anti-Communist crusade cannot devolve into a simple count of those units in the army who oppose Communism and those who sympathize with it strongly enough to fight for their convictions. Actually, such elements appear to be relatively small. There is a large middle group in the armed forces that would be chiefly influenced by an appeal from President Sukarno to preserve national unity. Much of the higher level army leadership can probably be included in this group.

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6. There are certain army units, however, whose anti-Communist or pro-Communist orientation bears mentioning. In the former category are the 36 battalions of the west Java military area

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and the three battalions of the RPKAD (army paratroops), located in the Djakarta area. In any move against the Communists these forces would play the major role.

7. The most pronounced pro-Communist sympathy within the army is found in the central Java and north Sumatra military areas, where the PKI is strong and active. The central Java military commander was not involved in the recent coup attempt and came out against the plot without too much delay.

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9. The military commander of north Sumatra has been so cooperative with the pro-Communist governor there that in the past the overall Sumatran army commander unsuccessfully tried to have him replaced.

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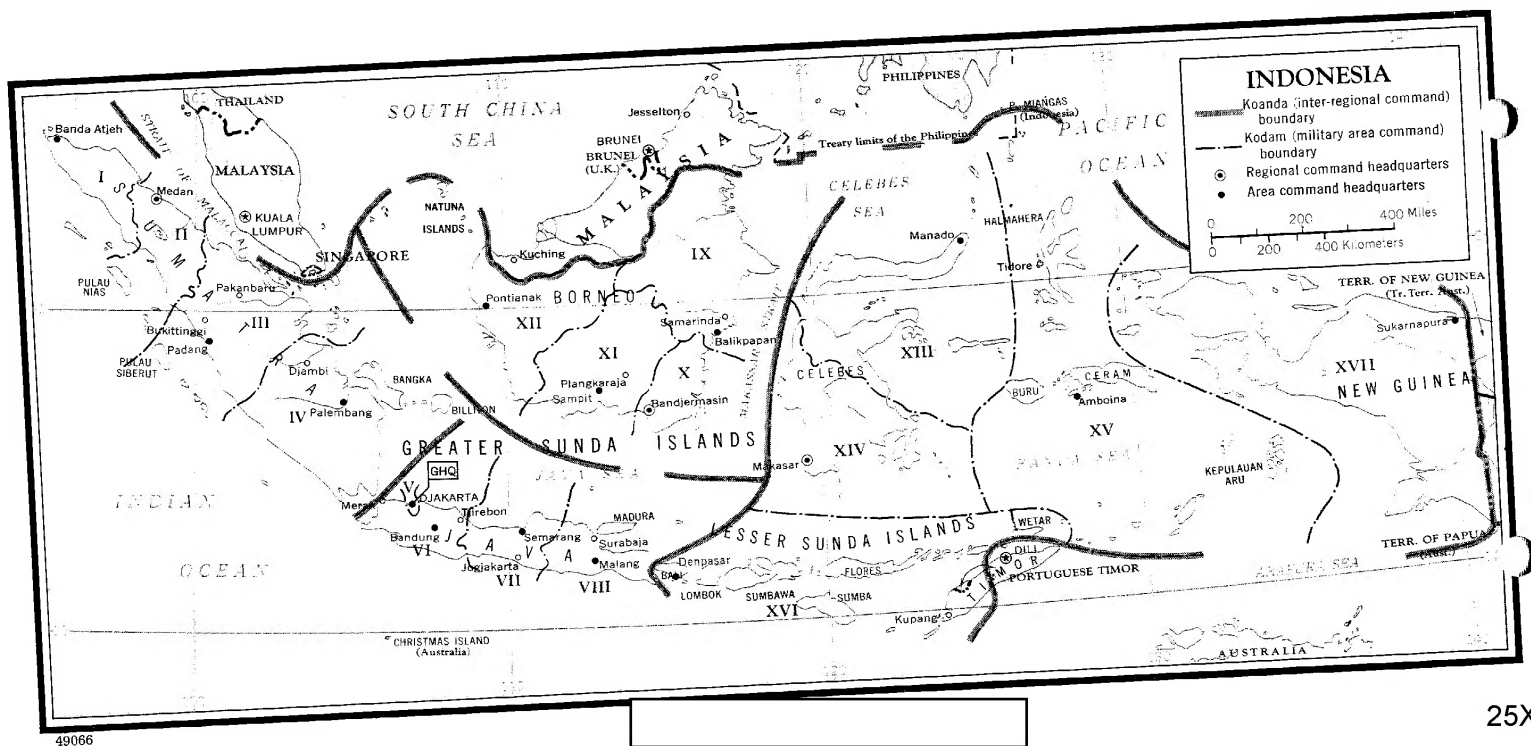
The US Consulate in Medan has reported that the army could probably not take strong anti-Communist steps in this area of Sumatra without bringing in outside troops.

10. There is also some Communist influenced army units in east Java and the military area comprising Bali and the Lesser Sunda Islands.

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INDONESIAN ARMY LOYALTIES

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